

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 21 January 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Naste Calovski (Yugoslavia)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 606th plenary meeting and the 1992 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the very beginning, I wish to recall that, during the intersessional period, we learnt the sad news of the passing away of Ambassador Rikhi Jaipal, former Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Secretary-General of the Conference. Ambassador Jaipal had a distinguished career in the Foreign Service of India. He served his country in Moscow, Vienna and Belgrade. As representative of Yugoslavia, I should say that he earned our respect and admiration for his diplomatic skill and human values. He completed his diplomatic service as Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations. He became, between 1979 and 1984, the first Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Secretary-General of this body. At the beginning of the Conference's work, he faced the heavy responsibility of advising it on delicate questions relating to all its organizational arrangements, as well as on substantive issues which the Conference had to address in a systematic way for the first time since the multilateral disarmament negotiating body was established in its present configuration in 1962. He contributed significantly in developing a number of practices and precedents which greatly helped the Conference to overcome times of deep political confrontation. He did so with knowledge of diplomatic practice and fairness for all views and positions. He also promoted, with his outstanding personal qualities, a climate of human relations among the members of the Conference, which transcended political differences and greatly helped the Conference to pass through such hazardous times.

It might be appropriate for me to recall that he played a substantial role in the consultations leading to the establishment, for the first time since the very opening of multilateral disarmament negotiations, of a subsidiary body open to all members to consider the all-important question of a nuclear test ban.

I wish to ask the representative of India, on behalf of the Conference, to transmit to his Government and to Mrs. Sheila Jaipal, as well as to the other members of the family, our deeply felt condolences on their loss, which is also felt not only in his own country but by all of us.

If no member wishes to take the floor at this stage, I should like to invite the Conference to pay tribute to Ambassador Rikhi Jaipal by observing a minute of silence.

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I give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Shah.

Mr. SHAH (India): My delegation would like to express its gratitude to you and the Conference for the warm words of tribute bestowed upon late Ambassador Rikhi Jaipal, the first Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, who passed away at New Delhi in November 1991.

(Mr. Shah, India)

His tragic loss came as a great shock to all of us who had known him personally. He was not only one of the most brilliant and outstanding officers of the Indian Diplomatic Service but also a man of principles, of literary tastes and a cheerful and amiable disposition. In carrying out his professional tasks he had always maintained a fairness and respect for all views and positions.

Ambassador Jaipal had an enviable career. From his initial stint in Burma (now Myanmar) from January 1949 to May 1951, he moved on to serve at the Indian Mission in Trinidad till 1954. In 1954 he was a member of the delegation to the United Nations Trusteeship Council, served as the Indian representative on the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories in East Africa and later in 1958 as the member of the United Nations Mission to the Cameroons. His career then took him to the USSR where he was Deputy Chief of the Indian Mission from 1962 to 1967. He later served as India's Ambassador to Yugoslavia. From 1974 to 1979, he was India's Ambassador to the United Nations where he also represented India on the Security Council.

From June 1979 to December 1984 he held the rank of Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva. His contributions to the field of disarmament in general and to the Conference particularly are known to many who have worked in this field. His instrumental role in getting a working group established on a nuclear test ban was one of the many notable achievements during his stay in Geneva as Secretary-General of the Conference.

Ambassador Jaipal continued to associate himself with disarmament matters even after his retirement from active diplomatic life. He continued to work as a "think tank" on many important issues of international relations and on disarmament matters. He was a regular visitor to Geneva and lectured to the participants in the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme every year. He was on the Executive Board of a number of non-governmental organizations associated with disarmament and was a considered and acknowledged repository of knowledge in the disarmament field.

Ambassador Rikhi Jaipal was also an international author of repute in the field of international relations and disarmament and has a number of books to his credit. The last one, Memories of a Half Life, was, in many ways, the culmination of his efforts in the field of disarmament.

While the professional aspect of his life is known to everyone, what is not known are the poetic abilities of Ambassador Jaipal. A collection of his poems entitled Flowers of Grass bears testimony to the poet that was hidden inside him. It is in this book that he writes that at his last meeting of the Conference, he penned the following lines about disarmament negotiations:

(Mr. Shah, India)

"It's the same old bargaining in the market place,
Losing nothing, gaining something, saving face;
To count Pershings instead of blessings
Is taking too many risks with the human race.
Ask not for whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for the arms race that rolls
Forever forward
Never backward;
It tolls also for all living souls."

The loss of Ambassador Jaipal is irreparable. In him we have lost a great visionary in matters relating to disarmament and international relations but we will continue to derive inspiration from all that he said and achieved. Mr. President, I thank you and the Conference once again and would like to assure you that we shall convey the kind thoughts expressed on behalf of the CD and yourself to the bereaved family.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for his statement. We shall now process with our business for today.

As I am assuming today, as representative of Yugoslavia, the responsibility of presiding over this body, I wish to assure you of my close cooperation during the coming weeks. I shall be available to deal with any matter which members of the Conference might consider relevant to our work. At the same time, I am convinced that your help and advice will be of great assistance to me in organizing the activities of the Conference. Allow me also, on behalf of the Conference, to thank Ambassador Arteaga of Venezuela for his competence and diplomatic expertise in discharging his responsibilities as President of the Conference during the month of August and the intersessional period which has just ended.

I should like also to wish personal and professional success to the former representatives of Belgium and Mongolia who left us recently. I am happy to welcome their successors who have already been accredited to the Conference. I refer to Ambassadors Michel Servais of Belgium and Shirchinjavyn Yumjav of Mongolia, to whom I pledge our cooperation in the new assignments given to them by their Governments.

At this point, with your permission, as my opening statement, I would like to make the following observations on the questions before the Conference.

This year's session of the Conference on Disarmament is, without doubt, opening in a significantly changing manner. The cold war lid has been lifted, but the construction of a new balance has not yet been completed.

It is justified to be optimistic, since dialogue and partnership are taking the place of the confrontations and mistrust of the past decades. But there are no less uncertainties and disturbances in world relations today.

(The President)

What we can see is that the consolidation of democratic processes on national and international levels is a much more challenging task than many had thought it would be. The more so as there are no recipes prepared in advance. Democracy is much more than a simple transition from one state of affairs to another.

It is obvious that national and international priorities are changing at a speed sometimes difficult to follow, to control. We need to have serious studies of and solutions to the new security system in the light of contemporary developments and new realities. Thus, dealing with disarmament problems in this unique body for multilateral negotiations on disarmament gains in importance. Efforts at creating a new security balance by way of concrete negotiations and agreements on arms control and disarmament measures, as well as efforts aimed at levelling economic imbalances, represent priorities on today's world agenda.

This Conference should not be a place where only ongoing world changes shall merely be reflected. It has to offer its own contribution to the evolution of concepts on a new balance and, within that framework, to come up with legal and political conclusions to meet the needs of such a transformation. In this context, it is of the utmost importance that the Conference successfully anticipates future trends and events in this field. The members of this Conference will be successful, in this respect, only if they strictly uphold, respect and consistently apply international law.

The short-term and long-term (that is, strategic) interests of practically all participants are quite rapidly changing. Many of us, during this year's session, will not have the same approach to items on this Conference's agenda. Even the aims of disarmament measures will be viewed differently. I am convinced that, in this, we shall be more inventive. There will be many more views and our deliberations will be more enriching and hence more challenging. The procedure will perhaps be more complicated, as reaching a consensus will be a longer process, but consequently, the solutions will be durable and carry weight. We should do our utmost to harmonize those efforts for the interest of all. And this is why it is of paramount importance that we constantly ensure full transparency in the work of the Conference.

In all this, our main interest is that this Conference becomes an equal partner in the construction of a new security structure in the world, an independent partner but also part of the United Nations system that should grow into a fundamental instrument in the creation of the so-called new world order. Regardless of the multitude of responsibilities the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly will have in the construction of this new environment, this Conference cannot lag behind and should rid itself of certain criteria it adopted itself at some point in times gone by.

This means that we should also, among ourselves, create new relations of partnership. The times require respect for the interests of all, since then everyone takes on his own part of responsibility in the realization of the aims of this Conference.

(The President)

It is in this light that I see the priorities of our work. I think it will be exceptionally important that this year we wind up our work on the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons successfully. Nobody needs convincing that the initiatives for the control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, chemical and nuclear in particular, are of top priority.

I am convinced that the Conference will give important consideration to all items on the agenda. We have to make further efforts to reduce nuclear danger, to prevent an arms race in outer space, to eliminate radiological weapons, to enhance the work on the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

It is certain that there exists a political will to bring to a close the negotiations on the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, but in order to stay to the point we have to make sure that the convention is of equal interest to all members of the Conference and the United Nations as a whole. In this regard we shall require much patience and wisdom, to review and respect the interests of others and adopt realistic solutions.

I am deeply convinced of the new potential of this Conference as a main contributor to the new security order. The interest expressed that new, very important issues - transparency in armaments among others - be set before this Conference shows that there is still much to be done. Together, with all the other questions I mentioned at the beginning, I wish to believe that we are rightfully expecting a very active session this year and each and every one's contribution to the success of this Conference. If we are to take such a stand, our Conference could decisively influence the global agenda on disarmament.

That concludes my opening statement.

I should like to inform you that the consultations I have been holding on some organizational matters have been successful in the case of a number of questions that we had to settle so that the Conference might begin work on substantive issues immediately. We shall be able today to take decisions on the agenda and programme of work for the 1992 session, in connection with which I will make a presidential statement, and the establishment of several subsidiary bodies on various items of the agenda. Once we have listened to the speakers listed to address the plenary this morning, I shall invite the Conference to hold a brief informal meeting to confirm the consensus which has emerged on those questions, and then we shall resume the plenary to take action on them. In the coming days I will continue to consult with the members on the other pending organizational matters, so that we can advance in the consideration of the substantive questions before us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the groups on their efforts to settle as many questions as possible before the start of the CD. I would particularly like to thank the group coordinators, Ambassador Shah, Ambassador Solesby and Ambassador Tóth. At the same time, I would like to

(The President)

underline that my task was made easier because of the assistance and support of both Ambassadors Komatina and Berasategui, to whom I would like to express my thanks, hoping that we shall settle all pending questions very soon, and I would also like to thank very much my predecessor, Ambassador Arteaga.

I shall now invite the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Komatina, to take the floor in order to read out a message which has been addressed to us by the new Secretary-General, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The message from the Secretary-General to the 1992 session of the Conference on Disarmament reads as follows:

"It gives me great pleasure to address my first message to the Conference on Disarmament as it opens its 1992 session. You are resuming your important work in an international environment significantly different from the situation which existed only one year ago. The world is no longer hamstrung by past divisions. The end of the cold war has opened up unprecedented opportunities for the international community to seek a new system of international relations in which the costly burden of arms accumulation is replaced by efforts to ensure the security of all nations - big and small - at substantially reduced levels of armaments and armed forces. The momentum created by such significant agreements as INF, CFE and START, as well as certain unilateral measures announced last fall by some nuclear-weapon States, must be preserved and carried even further.

"Though we are significantly freer from the threat of nuclear confrontation and are witnessing substantial reductions in conventional armaments in Europe, the tasks ahead of us are, however, not less demanding. The recent recourse to arms in various parts of the world has forcefully reminded us that in order to be fully effective the process of disarmament must be concerned not only with the reduction of existing arsenals but also with the prevention of their actual use. I believe that in order to meet the demands placed upon it the international community must both enhance its preparedness to anticipate new challenges and strengthen its capacity to respond efficiently to the remaining threats to international security. In doing so we must recognize that, in a global context, regional and bilateral initiatives should increasingly become components of multilateralism rather than its substitute.

(Mr. Komatina, Secretariat)

"As the single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, the CD plays a pivotal political role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament. With the stereotypes of the cold war becoming things of the past, the Conference should not only reflect the changing international landscape, but also be instrumental in transforming approaches to disarmament negotiations. It should do so by generating new ideas and initiatives.

"The Conference is on the threshold of a major achievement of multilateral diplomacy, as it has now entered the final stage of the elaboration of a convention on chemical weapons. I am confident that the future chemical weapons convention will constitute a far-reaching security arrangement for effectively eliminating a barbaric and indiscriminate means of warfare, and act as a barrier to its possible future resurgence. I welcome the intensification of the negotiations on this issue and strongly urge the Conference to maintain the momentum and exert its utmost effort to achieve the goal it has set out for itself this year - a final agreement during the 1992 session.

"The progress achieved in bilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations is striking indeed. Yet further, more far-reaching efforts are needed to eliminate completely the nuclear danger. In these efforts, the Conference must be given the opportunity to fulfil its role as a negotiating forum.

"The time has arrived when the world realistically expects the nuclear Powers to reassess their need for nuclear testing. We are all keenly aware of the strong divergent perceptions that still persist on the timing of a nuclear test ban. I for one, however, strongly believe that a test ban is an indispensable step towards a world without nuclear weapons. I support the dialogue begun in the Conference on this issue and encourage it to continue to seek the achievement of this goal.

"The de-escalation of nuclear competition should make it possible for the Conference to make progress also towards finding a common approach to developing effective arrangements to ensure the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Recent accessions to the non-proliferation Treaty by a number of States, as well as the conclusion of various nuclear safeguard agreements with IAEA by others, are reassuring developments which make this task even more pressing. I also draw encouragement from the renewed interest of many States in making their respective regions completely free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. These States deserve the full support of the international community in their endeavours.

"I am aware that as of this session the Conference on Disarmament will address yet another complex and highly crucial issue, that of the interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms and the concomitant issue of military holdings and procurement

(Mr. Komatina, Secretariat)

through national production. The new mandate given to the United Nations to establish and maintain a Register of Conventional Arms might well provide the international community with an opportunity to create effective, reliable mechanisms for promoting military restraint, transparency and confidence-building as supportive measures in the pursuit of international security and the reduction of arms. The input of the Conference will provide, I am sure, a valuable contribution to ensuring that we succeed in making this register universal and non-discriminatory.

"The opportunity to make decisive progress towards a more secure world has never been better and we should not fail to seize it fully. For the challenging tasks ahead of you I wish you all the utmost success in your endeavours."

Here ends the message from the Secretary-General.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for transmitting the message from Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. I ask Ambassador Komatina to convey to the Secretary-General of the United Nations our appreciation for his important contribution to our work. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has also addressed to me a communication by which he transmitted the resolutions and decisions on disarmament adopted by the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The communication has been circulated in all official languages as document CD/1115.

I have on my list of speakers for this opening plenary meeting the representatives of Peru and Mexico. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru, Ambassador de Rivero.

Mr. de RIVERO (Peru) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I am very pleased that you are presiding over the Conference of Disarmament. In that context I offer you my delegation's full cooperation towards the success of your endeavours. We are all convinced here that your talent and experience will guide our deliberations productively and also innovatively. I also join you in welcoming Ambassador Servais of Belgium to the Conference on Disarmament. Before I begin my statement I wish to extend my sincere condolences to the former observer delegation of Chile (as we have not yet admitted observers) on the passing away of the Ambassador of Chile in Geneva, Rodomiro Tomic. His death will leave a tremendous void for Latin American democracy and diplomacy.

On behalf of the delegations of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Peru, I am very pleased to introduce the Cartagena Declaration on Renunciation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was signed, at the initiative of the President of Peru, at the meeting of Andean Group presidents held in the city of Cartagena de Indias in Colombia on 4 December 1991. The Declaration is contained in document CD/1114, which has been circulated in all the official languages and was placed in your pigeon-holes this morning.

(Mr. de Rivero, Peru)

This is the first time in the history of disarmament that a populated geographical area of the planet has become a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, through the Declaration - it is important to emphasize to this Conference - the Andean countries, in the same Declaration, also expressed their determination to become unconditional original signatories of the convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons. The Cartagena Declaration is the culmination of a combined effort, but it is also the start of a gradual process to regulate the acquisition and transfer of advanced weaponry and related technology and prevent the strategic destabilization of Latin America and the Caribbean.

This issue that I am now addressing forms part of a regional position put forward by Peru that I reported on to this Conference last year, and it is now prompting growing worldwide interest. International arms transfers, arms production and trade in dual-purpose technologies are a source of concern because of the regional instability that they generate. The Gulf conflict is the clearest example of a lack of control over arms transfers that benefited no one. Last year the General Assembly took a major step forward with resolutions 46/36 L and 46/36 H because it sets up a register of arms transfers and requests this Conference to address this matter as soon as possible this year.

In the past four years we have witnessed a sort of spectacular avalanche of political, economic and strategic changes. As a result of these changes we have entered a qualitatively new era in international relations, with a different cast, where strategic power is based less and less on military factors and increasingly on economic and technological factors. All of this has come about in the midst of a tremendous revolution in which the market economy system, in economic matters, and the system of representative democracy in the political arena, are being adopted everywhere. Undoubtedly the threats to world peace have diminished sharply. However, new situations of international instability have arisen. World peace is now possible, but the world is more unstable. There is a new concrete situation of instability that we might call "nuclear confusion". This nuclear confusion is characterized by an easing of central control of certain categories of nuclear weapons and also by uncertainty as to the destination of nuclear material and the possibilities of unlawful trade in enriched uranium and plutonium, as well as the possible dissemination of the know-how and technology involved in producing weapons of mass destruction or their components. And also by the possible provision of services by scientists for the development of weapons of mass destruction.

A further emerging factor that is linked to this "nuclear confusion" is the role that is now falling to the regions, as in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. It is of course pleasing to note the new active role of the regions in a context where the bipolarization of international relations has ended. It would be absurd in this context for this to pass unnoticed in the Conference on Disarmament, because if there is a conviction that the international order now taking shape impresses forcefully on us, it is the need to strengthen regional involvement within the Conference on Disarmament, as the main basis of progress towards overall disarmament.

(Mr. de Rivero, Peru)

The Conference on Disarmament cannot overlook or remain indifferent to this new international factor that I have described. We believe that if we sidestep new issues for our agenda and do not give the regional groups an active and important role in the Conference, this would be tantamount to embalming the Conference amid traditional topics and groupings that follow a ritual characteristic of the inertia that was brought about by the cold war.

We believe that the changes, the new situations of instability and the active role of the regions have de facto changed the agenda of this Conference and, also, in effect, highlighted the problem of regional imbalance in its membership. When in 1990 the Conference on Disarmament decided to conduct informal consultations on ways of enhancing its effectiveness and functioning, what it sought to do was secure the adoption of measures which, while not departing from the framework of paragraph 120 of the Final Document adopted by the first special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on disarmament, would allow this Conference to make certain changes so as to enhance its productivity. However, today basic changes in circumstances are taking place in the international context, and they have relegated the problem of productivity in this Conference to the background, given the imminent risk that the present might elude it. In such circumstances, to continue in our routine ways could be interpreted as bureaucratic.

My delegation is of the view that, without changing the agenda and programme of work for this year, the question of enhancing the effective functioning of the Conference could be addressed through the appointment of two special coordinators, one to foster informal consultations with a view to updating the agenda and the rules of procedure of the Conference, and the other to foster informal consultations on membership and the new structure of the regional groups. An aggiornamento to bring the Conference on Disarmament into line with the new international circumstances is essential and a task to which we must contribute. This year we must embark on the opening up of the Conference towards the future.

The Conference on Disarmament has the ineluctable responsibility to finalize this year the convention to eradicate all chemical weapons once and for all from the face of the Earth, thus ending a barren 15-year period during which the Conference on Disarmament did not produce any agreement. It is on the threshold of this deadline, which will determine the future of the Conference on Disarmament, that I venture to make three comments on the approach that should guide the negotiations so as to ensure that they are successful and that by the end of this year we have a convention banning chemical weapons.

My first thought relates to the scope of the prohibition and the intended beneficiary of protection under the convention. On this important aspect of the negotiations, there are some - guided no doubt by the best of intentions - who would like to exclude from the convention any gap, ambiguity or loophole that could give rise to possible forms of non-compliance that are not explicitly prohibited in the text. With the best intentions they seek a

(Mr. de Rivero, Peru)

perfect legal instrument. Of course, ideally we should set forth an absolute, perfect prohibition. However, since beings are not perfect, and nor are diplomats, there is no alternative but to achieve a complete prohibition, in the context of what is possible and necessary, so as to provide for regional and global security and confidence.

When we say that the provisions should fall within the context of what is possible and necessary, what we mean is that their scope can never go beyond what can qualitatively or quantitatively be examined, certified and verified. There should be no doubt whatsoever as to the intended beneficiary of protection - human beings and, by extension, animals. Expanding the scope of protection to plants, even though the prohibition may be specifically restricted to use, would give rise to a series of collateral problems, such as the verification and implementation of article X, which refers to the threat of use, *inter alia*. The generic or unlimited inclusion, within the definition of chemical weapons, of those substances that do not fall within the classification of "supertoxic lethal" or "lethal" chemicals should be handled very cautiously, and it might perhaps be advisable, since the prohibition cannot be absolute and perfect, to give pride of place in the definition to the effects that occur, that is death, temporary disability or permanent injury. Only in so far as a toxic chemical specified in the convention produces these effects in human beings or animals may it be considered a chemical weapon.

My second thought on the chemical weapons negotiations relates to the problem arising from the destruction of the stockpiles, which according to declarations exceed 90,000 tons. The issue of converting chemicals to a form unsuitable for production of chemical weapons in facilities specifically designed and equipped for that purpose, as provided for in articles IV and V and their annexes, is currently being reconsidered in certain specialized sectors, in view of the difficulties being encountered by at least one of the chemical-weapon States in achieving the total destruction of its chemical stockpile within the stipulated 10-year time-frame. In my delegation's opinion it would be appropriate to re-examine the concept of destruction in the light of the observations and difficulties prompted by the 10-year time-frame. The experts state that starting up a facility to destroy chemical weapons, for example, could take between three, four or six years, including the initial feasibility study. We are all aware, moreover, that the destruction of chemical weapons is very costly, particularly because of the physical security and environmental protection measures involved. We are also aware that there may be alternative methods and technologies to neutralize chemical-weapon stockpiles completely. On the other hand, the 10-year time-frame could be retained, provided that we are all convinced that this is a genuine, feasible time-frame that would be enough for carrying out the destruction or possible neutralization of chemical weapons, and that this will not lead to undue haste or pressure that might endanger the environment.

(Mr. de Rivero, Peru)

My third and final thought relates to the problem of challenge inspections. Working paper 371 of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons to a large extent summarizes the present status of the negotiations. However, unfortunately some still wish to some extent to distort the basic component in the original proposal to carry out such inspections in any place, at any time, and without delay. As far as my delegation is concerned, challenge inspection would be the last resort provided for under the convention in extreme cases when the other mechanisms available prove inadequate to resolve or clarify any doubt that arises from compliance with obligations under the convention. It is therefore important to emphasize and reiterate the exceptional or extreme nature of challenge inspection, because it is only in this fashion that we can understand the discretionary powers that should be conferred on the inspection team. My delegation therefore considers it questionable that the "final" perimeter of the site where the inspection is to be conducted may, in the final analysis, be the perimeter proposed by the inspecting State. It can also distort a challenge inspection if the inspected State is authorized to select alternative measures other than full and broad access for the inspectors.

If we bear in mind a recent case which has given rise to concern in the international community, we must agree that if we accept challenge inspections with ambiguities or restrictions, they will simply lose all justification. In this way we will be losing one of the most intelligent and appropriate mechanisms for ensuring confidence in compliance with the obligations and resolving doubts and questions that any convention, however perfect we may wish it to be, may have.

Before concluding, I would like to highlight once again the importance that my delegation attaches to agenda item 1 of this Conference, a complete nuclear test ban. Last year, the Ad Hoc Committee was able to conduct more exhaustive work, thus complementing the work done in 1990. However, it cannot continue indefinitely to follow a methodology which excludes the negotiation of a comprehensive treaty that would ban tests once and for all. The major historical changes that I have referred to this morning, as well as the nature of the new threats and cases of instability facing the world and the regions, compel this Conference to move forward towards the negotiation of a comprehensive treaty on a complete nuclear test ban. No argument can serve to justify delay. This year, the Conference must take a further step towards giving concrete form to that goal, which is shared by the majority of mankind.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Peru for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Marín Bosch.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, please accept the warm congratulations of the delegation of Mexico as you take up the presidency of this Conference. In the year you have spent in Geneva you have distinguished yourself by your pleasant manner and your professionalism, qualities that will ensure the success of your term in this

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

initial stage of our work. We should like to put on record our appreciation for the way in which Ambassador Horacio Arteaga performed his duties as President, as well as the contribution made by the other members of the Venezuelan delegation. We sincerely regret the passing away of Ambassador Radomiro Tomic, a distinguished Chilean and an outstanding Latin American who ardently defended the universal values of peace and justice. We also endorse your words in paying tribute to the memory of Ambassador Rikhi Jaipal, a good friend of this Conference and a good friend of the United Nations.

We listened carefully to the first message the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has addressed to this Conference. We welcome his commitment to the cause of disarmament and his comments on the role of this Conference and the priority issues on its agenda. For the first time in a decade, Ambassador Maj Britt Theorin is not attending the opening session of the CD. We shall miss her enthusiasm and knowledge of disarmament matters. We cordially welcome our dear friends, Ambassadors Komatina and Berasategui, and our new colleague from Belgium, Ambassador Michel Servais. We wish his predecessor, Ambassador Marcel Houlliez, all the best. We should also like to welcome the delegation of the Russian Federation.

The world of January 1992 is a very different world from that of just a few years ago, when a chain of events was set in motion which, at the end of last month, culminated in the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The social and economic cost of these changes is impossible to assess, and the risks involved in the political dismantling of one of the two military super-Powers are a source of widespread concern. From one day to the next, the number of nuclear-weapon States has risen from five to eight. From one day to the next, the bilateral nuclear disarmament process agreed to in 1991 has been rendered more complicated, and despite the declared intention of the newly independent States to rid themselves of those weapons, the problems raised by their reduction and eventual elimination have multiplied. How are the provisions of a treaty negotiated bilaterally to be implemented when now there are at least five countries directly involved? The problem does not appear to have an arithmetical solution, since the sum of the parts of what was the USSR no longer adds up to the whole.

The year 1992 will be a watershed for Europe as was the year 1492. Today, as 500 years ago, we are witnessing an internal readjustment in Europe and a redefinition of its relationship with the rest of the world. As occurred half a millenium ago, there are Europeans who act as if the rest of the world did not exist, and there are others who seek new horizons. Today, as 500 years ago, we are living in a time of threats but also of promises. In the economic field, the assuredness with which the Twelve were pursuing the path towards greater integration has been affected by the inevitable enlargement of the Community, with its concomitant advantages and problems. In the social field, tensions have reappeared between European and

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

non-European populations, whose saddest manifestations have been outbreaks of xenophobia. In the political field, the disappearance of the socialist camp from Europe has blurred ideological differences, and a greater uniformity of thought can already be glimpsed. With the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact, the members of NATO are scrambling to redefine their military strategies. Some have already begun to cut their armies and military budgets with a view to moving from armies and weapons designed to defend them from a possible attack on their own territory to rapid deployment forces. This was one of the lessons of the Gulf war.

The changes in the international climate have also been felt in multilateral forums. As early as 1989 some countries began to change their position on certain fundamental issues. But it was the action taken by the Security Council in the case of Iraq that made it evident how much the world balance has shifted. During the recent session of the General Assembly there was tangible proof of this. To begin with, the 280 resolutions adopted by the Assembly in 1991 reflect a reduction of virtually 20 per cent with regard to 1990 to a total that had not been recorded in 15 years. And of those 280 resolutions, almost 80 per cent were adopted, as in 1990, without objection, that is, with no negative votes. It had been years since anything similar had occurred in the Assembly.

With regard to the disarmament items, the 38 resolutions adopted marked the lowest figure since the 1970s. I should point out, however, that 17 of those resolutions (45 per cent) were put to a vote. Among them are several of special interest to the CD. The most important is resolution 46/38 C, on the role of this "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum". In it the Assembly reiterates that in the present international climate it is more than ever imperative to give additional impetus to negotiations on disarmament at all levels. Thus, after welcoming the progress in the negotiations on the draft convention on the elimination of chemical weapons, the General Assembly again urged the CD to intensify its work on all the items on its agenda through substantive negotiations within the framework of the ad hoc committees. Resolution 46/38 C was adopted by 131 votes in favour, 8 against and 23 abstentions. Four countries were absent. Nine members of this Conference abstained and seven voted against. In explaining their negative vote, some pointed out that, since the CD works by consensus, the Assembly's resolutions regarding its work should also be approved by consensus. Some of those same delegations co-sponsored the text on the establishment of an arms register, contained in resolution 46/36 L, which, incidentally, was also put to a vote. In it the Assembly assigned a further task to this Conference when it requested it "to address, as soon as possible, the question of the interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, including military holdings and procurement through national production, and to elaborate universal and non-discriminatory practical means to increase openness and transparency in this field". It further requested the CD "to address the problems of, and the elaboration of practical means to increase, openness and transparency related to the transfer of high technology with military applications and to weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with

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with existing legal instruments". The General Assembly invited the Secretary-General to provide to the CD "all relevant information". Finally, the resolution requested the CD to include in its annual report to the Assembly a report on its work on this issue.

It is obvious that we will have to find an appropriate mechanism to study or address "as soon as possible" this item which will appear on the agenda of the next Assembly, under the title of "Transparency in armaments". This is an important issue whose consideration we have supported since the Government of Japan first suggested it in May of last year. However, we should avoid sterile procedural discussions about how and when we will take up the subject. It should be remembered that since 1 January this year a universal and non-discriminatory Register of Conventional Arms has been established at United Nations headquarters in New York. During this year the Register is to include data provided by States in accordance with the procedures and requirements regarding information, which will initially comprise those set out in the annex to resolution 46/36 L. The Secretary-General, with the assistance of a panel of governmental technical experts nominated by him, will have to elaborate the technical procedures and make any adjustments to the annex I have already referred to for the effective operation of the Register. He will also have to prepare a report on the "modalities for early expansion of the scope of the Register by the addition of further categories of equipment and inclusion of data on military holdings and procurement through national production". Moreover, Member States will be required to submit their views on the various aspects of the Register by 30 April 1994, the year in which another group of technical experts will be established to study the operation and "further development" of the Register. Hence this is a Register that will have several stages, and an effort to be pursued along various lines. Ours, here in Geneva, is but one of them.

What already exists - and this is something that we must bear very much in mind - is a Register of Conventional Arms which for the time being covers only data on the transfer of such arms. No register was established to include, as of now, the production of conventional weapons, or weapons of mass destruction, as many of us suggested during the last General Assembly. We nurture the hope that the main sponsors of the resolution, which include some of the world's major arms suppliers, will be the first to provide the United Nations with the data necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the Register. They will thus be practising what they preach and in this way they will encourage other States to fulfil their obligations so that we can refine an information system that, over time, can build confidence and strengthen the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament.

During the last General Assembly it also proved possible to merge the two texts which for many years had been adopted in parallel on the question of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. The new text is contained in resolution 46/29, adopted by a vote of 147 for and 2 against, with 4 abstentions and 13 delegations absent. That vote reflects the firm position of the overwhelming majority of the international community in favour of

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putting an end to all nuclear testing once and for all. In this so-called "new world" nuclear weapons have no justification, if ever they had one. Furthermore, as was pointed out a year ago by Gerard C. Smith, a former Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency of the United States, "it is difficult to conceive of any single measure that would do more to stem the spread of the nuclear scourge than a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing". That quotation is taken from Arms Control Today, November 1990. Ambassador Smith is not the first senior official of a nuclear-weapon State whose opinion on nuclear testing changed after he left Government service. At a recent seminar held in Princeton, New Jersey, we noticed that something similar is happening in the scientific community, especially among those atomic physicists involved in nuclear testing programmes who, once retired, give up trying to justify such tests and instead work for a ban.

Mexico continues to advocate the prompt conclusion of a treaty that will ban all nuclear tests. Together with other countries we have proposed an amendment to the partial test-ban Treaty in order to convert it into a CTBT. That process will continue this year with a series of consultations to be conducted by the President of the Amendment Conference, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas of Indonesia. But that should not serve as an excuse for the CD to continue dodging this priority issue. Two years ago, as a result of the flexibility of the majority of its members, the CD re-established the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, but without a negotiating mandate. In spite of this, the Committee's work was useful, though we consider that in 1992 it will be difficult to improve on what we have already achieved in the discussions of 1990 and 1991 under the leadership of Ambassadors Donawaki and Chadha respectively. We should now move from discussions to the negotiation of the provisions of a CTBT.

Once again a large part of the CD's time and efforts will be spent on the negotiation of a convention on the total prohibition of chemical weapons. Since last year important changes have been made in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons: in February the qualification that prevented it from proceeding to the finalization of a draft convention was dropped, and in June, besides the call to intensify negotiations "with a view to striving to achieve a final agreement on the convention by 1992", the prohibition of use was included in the title of the future convention. Those changes have begun to bear fruit. This is reflected in the report that we submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, which in its resolution 46/35 C urges the CD, as a matter of the highest priority, to resolve outstanding issues so as to achieve a final agreement during the present session.

The work done by the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons during the intersessional period is further proof of the commitment we all have to strive to achieve an agreement during 1992. However, bearing in mind the many implications of the series of outstanding issues, it is advisable to avoid setting deadlines which later we may not be able to keep. The example of the Uruguay Round of negotiations in GATT could serve as a precedent. That does not imply that we should reduce the pace of the Committee's work, but rather

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that time should be given to assess carefully the effects of each and every one of the provisions which will be included in the future convention, so that it can be applied on a truly universal scale.

One year ago, referring to the question of the enlargement of the CD, my delegation reviewed in detail the evolution of the composition of this disarmament negotiating forum. We think that it would be useful if we could discuss that and other matters of general interest in an appropriate format. The CD's procedures, as we have said before, are too formal and formalistic. It is obvious that a few alterations in our modus operandi will not change our modus vivendi. But we do think it would be useful to explore some different paths, since the inertia of our old habits is at times our worst enemy. It would perhaps be advantageous for all if we had an informal forum to air many of the questions which hamper or complicate our work and which can now only be dealt with in the presidential consultations on Wednesdays, in the slow process of talks within and among the various groups, or, even worse, in the time-consuming machinery of bilateral contacts. Of course, social occasions sometimes offer an opportunity to raise some subjects, but they cannot be a substitute for a fixed meeting place. And this is the background to the following suggestion: that the current President or the Secretary-General of the CD should periodically convene the heads of delegation to discuss - without papers, without summary records and without interpreters - matters that are considered to be of general interest. This is a procedural suggestion. Now in conclusion I shall venture to make a substantive one. We are all aware that the subject of the relationship between this Conference and the world outside this room has been a leitmotiv of our debates. Over the past few years the Conference on Disarmament has heard a number of statements in plenary regarding various aspects of the question of non-proliferation of weapons and weapon systems, especially nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Yet the CD has still not managed to address these matters in a proper format. It is proposed that, without prejudice to its formal agenda, the CD should consider in 1992 the whole range of issues related to these matters. To that end an informed open-ended group could be established. No aspect of the subject would be excluded, and the groups informal character would allow us the opportunity of identifying questions that the Conference could examine more closely and, if that should be agreed, more formally. Since it would be an informal group, there would be no need to restate known positions on the subject, nor would it necessarily have to report to anyone on its work and results. Perhaps you, Mr. President, might seek the views of the other members of the Conference on this proposal.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words that he addressed to me. That concludes my list of speakers. Does any other member wish to take the floor at this stage? I see none.

(The President)

As announced at the opening of this plenary meeting, I will now convene an informal meeting of the Conference to consider the agenda and programme of work for the 1992 session and the question of the re-establishment of some subsidiary bodies.

The plenary meeting was suspended at 11.40 a.m. and resumed at 12.10 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 606th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed. I now wish to invite the Conference to formalize the agreements reached at the informal meeting we have just held. The relevant draft decisions are contained in documents CD/WP.416 to 419.

I now put before the Conference for adoption document CD/WP.416, containing the draft provisional agenda and programme of work for the annual session of the Conference. If there is no objection, I shall consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In connection with the decision that we have just taken, I wish to make the following statement for the record:

"In taking into account the recommendations made to it by the General Assembly, in accordance with rule 27 of the rules of procedure, the Conference notes the importance of the subject dealt with by General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, entitled 'Transparency in armaments', and the request made to it by the General Assembly 'to address, as soon as possible, the question of the interrelated aspects of the excessive and destabilising accumulation of arms, including military holdings and procurement through national production, and to elaborate universal and non-discriminatory practical means to increase openness and transparency in this field', 'to address the problems of, and the elaboration of practical means to increase, openness and transparency related to the transfer of high technology with military applications and to weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with existing legal instruments', and 'to include in its annual report to the General Assembly a report on its work on this issue'. The Conference also notes that it can decide at any time to include a new item on the agenda, and that further consultations are needed in order to achieve consensus on the best modalities to address the subject-matter. I shall report to the Conference on the results of such consultations as they proceed.

"As regards the programme of work for the 1992 session, it is understood that the dates indicated for the three parts of the annual session do not prejudice any decision that the Conference may wish to adopt, should this be necessary, on additional work during the break between the first and second parts, as well as between the second and third parts of the session. It is also clear that if, for any reason relating to our work, we were to adjust these dates during 1992, we could do so at any time during the session."

(The President)

I shall now proceed to document CD/WP.417, by which the Conference will re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons and appoint as its Chairman Ambassador Adolf Ritter von Wagner of Germany. I see no objection to the draft decision, and we shall therefore adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I am pleased to note that, by this quick decision at the opening of our work for 1992, the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is now in a position to resume work immediately, in order to intensify its negotiations this year on a final agreement on a convention banning chemical weapons. Allow me also, on behalf of the Conference, to extend our congratulations to Ambassador von Wagner on his appointment to the heavy responsibility of conducting the work of the Ad Hoc Committee at this crucial stage of its work. His knowledge of the subject-matter and his diplomatic competence will, I am sure, provide the necessary impetus for these negotiations. I give the floor to Ambassador von Wagner.

Mr. von WAGNER (Germany): Mr. President, let me express my delegation's deep satisfaction at having the privilege to negotiate world-wide arms control and disarmament questions under your able guidance. We wish you luck and success.

The Conference on Disarmament has just decided on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. I feel very honoured that the Conference entrusted me with the task of chairing the Ad Hoc Committee. I should like to express my sincere thanks to all my colleagues for their confidence in my efforts. I feel very honoured and grateful - but above all, I feel obliged by the responsibility which accompanies the Ad Hoc Committee chairmanship in this critical year. You have my firm commitment that I will do everything to bring our common endeavour to a successful conclusion.

In this context, and here I should like to add to my prepared manuscript, I want to stress that I am perfectly aware that I need your trustworthy cooperation. I shall undertake concrete efforts to maintain close contact with all groups and delegations, and I shall consult with them as closely as possible in order to achieve smooth proceedings in the more formal meetings and sessions. At the same time, I should like to invite and encourage all delegates also to seek close contact with me; the cooperation I envisage cannot be a one-way street. Efforts, however, from all sides will achieve success.

The convention is clearly within reach this year, thanks to the contributions by all delegations and by the previous chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committee. I should like to pay tribute in particular to my predecessor, Ambassador Batsanov, who led the work of the Committee in a very skilful and pragmatic way. Due to the untiring efforts under particularly difficult circumstances by Ambassador Batsanov, his working group chairmen and Friends of the Chair, we now have the basis on which we can venture the last breakthrough to the signing of the convention.

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As we resume our negotiations on finalizing the global ban on chemical weapons, it may be useful to recall our basic negotiating objectives so as to put the remaining problems into perspective. First of all, we have the objective to rid the world of chemical weapons in order to achieve a gain in security for all of us. It has long been recognized that chemical weapons are a particularly cruel and repugnant means of warfare. One year ago, history gave us a lesson that should also have removed any lingering doubts about the role of chemical weapons in international security. If their existence continues to be legitimate, they pose a grave threat to international peace and security. The Gulf war and its antecedents have confirmed two conclusions. Firstly, despite their limited military utility, chemical weapons do have very harmful political properties. In the hands of unscrupulous aggressors, they can foster political and military adventurism. Secondly, non-proliferation efforts through export controls are insufficient to control the danger that chemical weapons constitute for the international community. The best non-proliferation measure is an effective chemical weapons ban that is based on global cooperative efforts.

Looking at these conclusions, one might wonder why it seems so difficult to bring the Geneva negotiations to a close. The security benefits which a global ban on chemical weapons would bring about seem too obvious to allow of any hesitation. Such security benefits would accrue to all countries, although national perceptions sometimes might differ. Some countries might have a particular interest in the chemical weapons convention. A Chinese scholar in the Chemical Defence Research Institute in Beijing observed last year:

"... developing countries face a more dangerous threat from chemical weapons than do developed countries. It is not surprising that all the uses of chemical weapons after World War I were against developing countries."

The quotation continues:

"... the statement 'Chemical weapons are the poor man's nuclear bomb' is wrong. The right statement is 'Chemical weapons are the sword of Damocles hanging over the poor man's head'."

The immediate security benefits which would flow from a global ban on chemical weapons already provide a compelling reason for strongly urging the Conference on Disarmament to conclude negotiations in Geneva. But there are further compelling reasons - reasons going beyond chemical weapons. Concluding the CWC successfully offers us the chance to inaugurate a qualitatively new era for multilateral arms control and disarmament. It is very difficult to maintain the momentum of a complex, long-term endeavour like multilateral arms control without any visible, tangible results. Success in this field requires treaties. The Conference on Disarmament in its present form has not produced one single international treaty text. The environmental modification Convention of 18 May 1977 was the last achievement of

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multilateral arms control to this date. Whereas - in the years just passed - disarmament treaties between the former cold war opponents have proliferated, arms control on a global scale seems to have come to a standstill.

This not too rosy picture would change dramatically if we finally came to terms with the few remaining issues of the chemical weapons convention. The convention would provide invaluable fresh impetus for the endeavour of multilateral arms control. The liberation of mankind from the threat of chemical weapons would have positive implications going far beyond the negotiating matter.

In addition to the direct security benefits, States parties to the convention would discover a completely new experience in applying an unprecedented body of provisions for global disarmament and verification. Experience in applying the instruments of the convention would help us to understand that reliable disarmament does not imply risk, but opportunity; not a danger to national sovereignty, but a singular opportunity to build on the foundation of a new, cooperative concept of international security.

The world needs such a new, cooperative security concept. We all know the global challenges of our time, which have united us into one large "community for survival". We have seen the fading away of the old East-West conflict, we witness the transformation into the vision of a zone of peaceful cooperation stretching from North America over the Atlantic Ocean and Europe to the Pacific. In this process, the cooperative instruments of confidence-building, arms control and disarmament have played a key role. It is true that these instruments cannot be utilized independently from overall political conditions. But it is also true that without such cooperative instruments tension and confrontation cannot be transformed into common efforts of building peace.

Looking at the remaining negotiating problems of the chemical weapons convention in this broader context, their relative significance, having been put into perspective, should have become clearer. The remaining obstacles must be surmountable, although they reflect serious questions like verification, trade issues, cooperation and old chemical weapons. Having a vision of the larger issues at stake, we will overcome these obstacles.

The success of the chemical weapons convention will depend largely on its universal acceptance. You, Mr. President, rightly pointed to this important feature in your opening statement. In this respect, the already large number of countries which have pledged early signature is very encouraging, and the Cartagena Declaration, which was introduced to the CD by Ambassador de Rivero of Peru is an additional pledge of the highest importance to this effect. Furthermore, all delegations in Geneva have clearly pronounced their strong interest in the success of the convention. The attractiveness of the convention will also play a key role with regard to universality. But more will be needed, in particular demonstrations of responsibility on the regional level. In some regions, long-standing political conflict might seem to require prior solution before accession to the chemical weapons convention is

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considered. However, there could be a fallacy in such thinking: as I have indicated before, arms control treaties are not only luxury items that follow peace; they are vital instruments in bringing about and strengthening peace.

We know that our negotiations have reached a watershed. The final breakthrough is in sight. The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 46/35 C, strongly urged the Conference on Disarmament, "as a matter of the highest priority, to resolve in the forthcoming months outstanding issues so as to achieve a final agreement during its 1992 session". If the Conference on Disarmament failed to live up to this task, the consequences for the global arms control dialogue might be grave - as the positive ramifications of success would go beyond chemical disarmament.

The time has come for a global ban on chemical weapons. After long periods of contentious debate and stagnation, we face a singular opportunity. Let us grasp it so that, during the months to come, we may adopt by consensus the text of the chemical weapons convention.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador von Wagner for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. We shall now turn to document CD/WP.418, concerning the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the draft decision.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I propose now that we turn to document CD/WP.419, containing a draft decision on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Radiological Weapons. Shall I also consider that the Conference adopts the draft decision?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In connection with agenda item 7, "New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons", it would be appropriate for us to keep in mind that, whenever it is appropriate for the Conference to deal with this agenda item and in the light of its existing priorities, it should keep under review, with expert assistance, as appropriate, the prohibition of the development and manufacture of those weapons and systems with a view to making, when necessary, recommendations on undertaking specific negotiations on the identified types of such weapons.

I should like now to refer to the question of further measures for the prevention of an arms race on the sea-bed. As you know, we must report to the General Assembly on this matter at the end of the 1992 session. During our informal consultations, it was agreed that in order to consider this subject, we would hold informal meetings later in the annual session.

At this point I would like to give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, and after that to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. BATSANOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to congratulate you on taking up this very important post at our Conference and to wish you every success in your very difficult work. I have taken the floor at this time as the outgoing Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, even though in a week I will of course be performing my last function, which is to present the report on our work last year. But I have taken the floor in order to congratulate Ambassador von Wagner very sincerely on taking over from me at this time, and to express my full conviction that under his leadership - I do not wish to dwell on his qualities, with which we are all familiar - we will achieve final success, by succeeding in finalizing the draft convention on chemical weapons.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you for your statement and for the kind words addressed to me. The Ambassador of Belgium has the floor.

Mr. SERVAIS (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, I would not wish to let this meeting end without expressing a word of thanks for the messages of welcome and encouragement which you and our colleagues from Peru and Mexico have expressed. I also thank my Mexican colleague for the wishes he expressed concerning my predecessor, Ambassador Marcel Houlliez. I will not fail to convey those greetings to him. I would simply like to tell you, Mr. President, that you can rely on my full support and that of my delegation in the delicate tasks that yourself and the members of the general secretariat of the Conference will have to address in the days and weeks to come.

The PRESIDENT: I thank you for your statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I will now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ambassador Komatina, for a statement on the services which will be available to the Conference during the 1992 session.

Mr. KOMATINA (Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): In view of existing financial constraints, we are mandated by the General Assembly to report to the Conference on the services to be assigned to it during the 1992 session. As in previous sessions, the Conference will be allocated 10 meetings per week with full servicing, and 15 meetings per week with full services during the sessions of the Seismic Group. In other words, we should be able to hold two daily meetings with full servicing throughout the whole of the 1992 session, plus one additional daily meeting when the Seismic Group is in session.

The secretariat has informed the Department of Conference Services of the importance of making provision for additional servicing for the negotiations on chemical weapons, should this become necessary. Of course, it is understood that, in order to ensure such additional services, the actual utilization of the 10 weekly meetings normally assigned to the Conference will be taken into account.

(Mr. Komatina, Secretariat)

As stated by you, Mr. President, and by your predecessor in connection with the programme of work for the annual session, the secretariat has also requested the Department of Conference Services to note that negotiations on chemical weapons may have to continue during the recesses between the first and second parts of the session, as well as between the second and third parts. Requirements during those periods have been estimated at three or four weekly meetings with full services, to be held on the days on which the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons regularly meets.

As the work of the Conference proceeds, it may be necessary to hold meetings of subsidiary bodies consecutively with other committees or working groups. This practice has in the past prevented the waste of allocated resources in the event of early adjournment of meetings. In this respect, punctuality in starting meetings of the Conference is also important. I wish to inform you that we are not using all the services assigned to us. In 1991 the Conference and its subsidiary bodies lost a total of 322 hours of full services. It is also understood that meetings with such services cannot be held in the evening or during weekends.

I also wish to recall that measures accepted by the Conference at the informal meeting held on 22 April 1986 concerning savings in documentation continue to be valid. In order to implement these decisions, all papers need to be presented well in advance.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for his statement. You will recall that the points raised today by Ambassador Komatina were taken up by me during our informal consultations, and no objections were raised to the arrangements that he has announced. So the Conference will therefore proceed accordingly.

I have no other business for today, but before I adjourn this plenary meeting I would like to inform you that in the light of the new seating arrangements being followed this year, the secretariat will re-issue document CD/8/Rev.4 with the corresponding change in annex I containing the list of member States. This will also be useful to all of us, since the secretariat informs me that the present document is practically out of print.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 23 January, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.